

## CHAPTER 10

# THE LEGAL STATUS OF FIGHTING AGAINST A CORRUPT GOVERNMENT



## 10.1 THE UNLAWFULNESS OF REBELLING AGAINST A GOVERNMENT THAT IS NOT EXPLICITLY IDOLATROUS

The Shariah has made it crystal clear that armed struggle against a Muslim government is impermissible, even if the government is sinful and corrupt, unless it makes an open declaration of disbelief, or there is a complete and absolute consensus in the *Umma* that the rulers have become disbelievers, or the rulers declare lawful that which is forbidden or vice versa, or they stop the believers from offering their prayers. This has been called *kufr bawāḥ* [manifest disbelief] and is proven from the following agreed upon hadith of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Junāda b. Abī Umayya said,

دَخَلْنَا عَلَى عَبَادَةَ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ وَهُوَ مَرِيضٌ، قُلْنَا: أَصْلَحْكَ اللَّهُ، حَدَّثَنَا حَدِيثٌ يَنْقُعُكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ سَمِعْتَهُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ. قَالَ: دَعَانَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ فَبَأْيَنَاهُ. فَقَالَ: فِيمَا أَخَذَ عَلَيْنَا أَنْ بَأْيَنَاهُ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاغَةِ، فِي مَنْشَطِنَا وَمَكْرُهَنَا، وَعُسْرَنَا وَسُرْسَنَا، وَأَثْرَةَ عَلَيْنَا، وَأَنْ لَا نُنَتَّاعَ الْأَمْرَ أَهْلَهُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَرَوُا كُفُرًا بَوَاحًا عِنْدَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِيهِ بُرْعَانٌ.

‘We went to see ‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit when he was sick and we said to him, “May God improve your condition! Narrate to us a hadith that God benefitted you with and you heard of from the Prophet ﷺ”. He said, “The Prophet ﷺ called us forward and we pledged fealty to him. In our pledge of fealty, he made us commit to hearing and obeying both when energetic and tired, and in difficulty and ease, and that we [as he ﷺ said] ‘do not come into conflict with the leaders that are over you unless you witness manifest disbelief for which you have proof with God’.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-fitān* [The Book of Tribulations], chapter: ‘The Saying of the Prophet ﷺ “After My Departure, You Will Observe Screen View Only—Click to get a hard copy: <http://www.MinhajPublications.com>

The hadith commentators have explained the phrase ‘manifest disbelief’ and stated that it must be so explicit that it leaves no room for an alternative interpretation [*ta’wīl*].

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī said,

وَوَقَعَ عِنْدَ الطَّبَرَانِيِّ مِنْ رِوَايَةِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ صَالِحٍ عَنِ ابْنِ وَهْبٍ فِي هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ:  
كُفُرًا صَرَّاحًا.

‘And in a variant of this report with al-Ṭabarānī from the narration of Aḥmad b. Ṣalīḥ from Ibn Wahb, the phrase, “explicit disbelief”, [*kufr ṣarāḥ*] occurs’.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on the phrase, ‘for which you have proof with God’, Ibn Ḥajar stated,

مُفْتَنَسَاهُ أَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ الْحُرُوجُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا دَامَ فِعْلُهُمْ يَحْتَمِلُ التَّأْوِيلَ.

‘The import of this is that it is impermissible to rebel against them [the rulers] so long as their actions have room for an alternative interpretation’.<sup>2</sup>

This means that revolt against the government would be legally permissible according to the Shariah when there is complete and absolute consensus on the disbelief of the government and no scope for any alternative interpretation for their actions. Ibn Ḥajar explained further,

قَالَ ابْنُ بَطَّالٍ: فِي الْحَدِيثِ حُجَّةٌ فِي تَرْكِ الْحُرُوجِ عَلَى السُّلْطَانِ وَلُو جَارٍ.

‘Ibn Baṭṭāl said, “This hadith contains a proof that the government should not be rebelled against, even if it is oppressive”.<sup>3</sup>

Things that You Will Dislike”, 6:2588 §6647; and Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-imāra* [The Book of Leadership], chapter: ‘The Obligation to Obey the Rulers in that which Does not Entail Disobedience, and the Prohibition of Disobeying Their Orders’, 3:1470 §1709.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 13:8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 13:11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 13:7.

So despite a government being unjust and unfair, armed rebellion against it is strictly prohibited; however, peaceful, constitutional, democratic and legal means can be used to effect a change.

Imam Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī commented on the word ‘proof’ used in the hadith and stated,

قوله: بُرهَانٌ أَيْ: نَصٌّ آتِيٌّ أَوْ حَبْرٌ صَحِحٌ لَا يَحْمِلُ التَّأْوِيلَ.

‘His statement ﷺ, “proof”, means a definitive text [*nass*] from a Qur’ānic verse or a rigorously authentic report that does not carry the possibility of an alternative interpretation’.<sup>1</sup>

Imam al-Qastalānī maintained the same view in his commentary, *Irshād al-sārī*.<sup>2</sup>

Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī described the same view in *Fath al-Mulhim* under the heading ‘The issue of Rebelling against the Unjust Rulers’. He says,

بِهَذَا الْحَدِيبَ اسْتَدَلَ جَمِيعُ الْعَلَمَاءِ عَلَى أَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ الْخُرُوجُ عَلَى السُّلْطَانِ  
الْجَائِرِ أَوِ الْفَاسِقِ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَظْهُرَ مِنْهُ كُفُرٌ صَرِيحٌ.

‘The majority of scholars infer from this hadith that it is impermissible to rebel against the unjust or corrupt ruler, unless he manifests explicit disbelief’.<sup>3</sup>

## 10.2 RAISING ARMS AGAINST MUSLIMS IS AN ACT OF DISBELIEF

The Prophet ﷺ stated that those who take up arms against the Muslims do not belong to the Muslim *Umma*. It is narrated by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said,

مَنْ حَمَلَ عَلَيْنَا السَّلَاحَ فَلَيَسْ مِنَّا.

‘He who raises arms against us is not from us’.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī, *‘Umdat al-qārī*, 16:33.

<sup>2</sup> Aḥmad al-Qastalānī, *Irshād al-sārī*, 15:9.

<sup>3</sup> Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī, *Fath al-Mulhim*, 3:184.

<sup>4</sup> Narrated by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-fitān* [The Book of Tribulations], Screen View Only—Click to get a hard copy: <http://www.MinhajPublications.com>

Islam not only prohibits the taking up of arms, initiation of armed struggle and revolt against the Muslims in an Islamic government, but also brands these actions as disbelief. Islam declares these actions as sedition and corruption on the earth. No good can come from them and they will always lead to civil strife and disorder. Therefore, contrary to resorting to terrorism and rebellion, one should always use peaceful means to struggle against oppression and injustice. If one has insight and understands this point, one will realize that there is no contradiction between the command to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and the prohibition of armed revolt against the rulers.

### 10.3 THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL WAY OF CHANGING A CORRUPT GOVERNMENT

Even if the rulers of an Islamic government are corrupt and unjust, armed rebellion against them is not allowed. However, the prohibition of armed struggle against an oppressive and corrupt government does not mean that the government has a license to continue with its injustice, corruption and atrocious policies. Islam has not only permitted but also commanded the Muslims to raise every possible voice against the unjust, nefarious and illegal deeds of the government, and to condemn and pressure it to mend its ways and reform. Islam has also recommended that the government be replaced if it refuses to listen to sound counsel and rejects reform. However, such replacement and transition should be a smooth, peaceful and just process void of any violence, bloodshed

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chapter: 'The Saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "He Who Raises Arms against Us is not from Us", 6:2591 §6659; Muslim in *al-Šaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-Īmān* [The Book of Faith], chapter: 'The Saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "He Who Raises Arms against Us is not from Us", 1:98 §98; Ahmād b. Ḥanbal in *al-Muṣnād*, 2:3 §4467; al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-hudūd* [The Book of Prescribed Punishments], chapter: 'What Has Come to Us Regarding One Who Brandishes a Weapon', 4:59 §1459; al-Nasā'ī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb tahrīm al-dam* [The Book on Prohibition of Bloodshed], chapter: 'Concerning the One Who Brandishes His Sword and then Thrusts it amongst People', 7:117 §4100; and Ibn Mājah in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-hudūd* [The Book of Prescribed Punishments], chapter: 'Concerning the One who Brandishes His Sword', 2:860 §2575.

or killing. This is the correct meaning of jihad against corrupt rulers. Therefore, killing people on the pretext of preventing evil and promoting truth and justice cannot be declared permissible.

The Prophet ﷺ said,

إِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْجِهَادِ كَلْمَةً حَقًّا عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ.

‘Indeed, the best jihad is a just word in the presence of an unjust ruler’.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking out against the oppression of the rulers falls under our duty. It is part of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. It is not disallowed; on the contrary, those who abstain from it are regarded as wrongdoers. The difference is that Islam has ordered us to use constitutional, legal and democratic means to effect a change, and commanded that the entire struggle be peaceful. This hadith does not permit killing, armed rebellion and terrorism. Seizing some parts of the land and imposing one’s view on others, shedding blood and committing acts of terrorism are all absolutely forbidden and are tantamount to disbelief. Wanton murder and mischief-mongering create chaos, disorder and anarchy in the *Umma*, and as a result, foreign powers get a chance to interfere in the internal affairs of the Muslim states. That is why the Shariah has ruled that rebellion should be put down firmly.

Umm Salama, the Mother of the Believers ﷺ, reported:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: إِنَّهُ يُسْتَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَمْرًا، فَسَعَرُّفُونَ وَتُنْكِرُونَ، فَمَنْ كَرِهَ فَقَدْ بَرِىءَ، وَمَنْ أَنْكَرَ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ، وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَلَا نُفَاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا، مَا صَلَوْا، أَيْ مَنْ كَرِهَ بِقَلْبِهِ وَأَنْكَرَ بِقَلْبِهِ.

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 3:19 §11159; al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-fitān* [The Book of Tribulations], chapter: ‘What Has Come to Us Concerning the Fact That the Best Jihad is a Just Word in the Presence of an Unjust Ruler’, 4:471 §2174; Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-malāḥim* [The Book of Tumultuous Battles], chapter: ‘Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil’, 4:124 §4324; al-Nasā’ī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-bay‘a* [The Book on the Pledge of Fealty], chapter: ‘Concerning the One Who Utters a True Word in front of an Unjust Ruler’, 7:161 §1209; and Ibn Mājah in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-fitān* [The Book of Tribulations], chapter: ‘Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil’, 2:1329 §4011.

The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Indeed, rulers will be appointed over you, and you find some things with them agreeable and other things disagreeable. So, whoever detests their bad deeds will be absolved of blame and whoever censures their bad deeds will find safety; but whoever is pleased with their bad deeds and follows them [will not find safety or be absolved of blame]’. The Companions said, ‘O Messenger of God! Should we not fight them?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer [i.e., are Muslims. “Hating and disapproving” refer to disliking from the heart]’.<sup>1</sup>

Interpreting this hadith, Qādī ‘Iyāq writes in *Ikmal al-muslim bi fawā'id Muslim*:

قَوْلُهُ: أَفَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا، مَا صَلُوْا عَلَىٰ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ مَنْعِ الْخُرُوجِ عَلَىٰ الْأَئِمَّةِ،  
وَالْقِيَامِ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا ذَامُوا عَلَىٰ كَلِمَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَلَمْ يُظْهِرُوا كُفُّرًا بَيْنَاهُمْ، وَهُوَ الْإِشَارَةُ  
هَاهُنَا: مَا صَلُوْا، أَيْ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ حُكْمُ أَهْلِ الْقِبْلَةِ وَالصَّلَاةِ، وَلَمْ يَرْتَدُوْا وَبَيْدُلُوْا  
الَّذِينَ وَيَدْعُوْا إِلَىٰ غَيْرِهِ. وَالْإِشَارَةُ أَيْضًا بِقَوْلِهِ: عَبْدًا حَبَشِيًّا يَقُوْدُكُمْ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، أَيْ  
بِالْإِسْلَامِ وَحُكْمِ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ جَارٌ.

The part, ‘Should we not fight them?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer’, further establishes what was mentioned before, in that it is prohibited to rebel against the rulers and revolt against them so long as they continue to hold to the phrase of Islam [‘There is no god but God’] and do not manifest evident disbelief. This is indicated here in the phrase, ‘Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer’. In other words, they are not to be fought so long as they continue to receive the rulings of the people of the *qibla* [Muslims] and prayer and do not apostate and alter the religion and call to another one besides it. This point

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Muslim in *al-Šaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-imāra* [The Book of Leadership], 3:1481 §1854; and Abū ‘Awāna in *al-Muṣnād*, 4:417–418 §7162.

is further indicated in his statement, ‘Even if he is an Abyssinian slave who leads you with the Book of God’: meaning Islam and the rulings of God’s Book, even if he is oppressive [you are not allowed to rebel against him].<sup>1</sup>

He further explained:

قَوْلُهُ ﷺ: وَلَكِنَّ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ مَعَنَاهُ: وَلَكِنَّ الْإِلَمَ وَالْعَقُوبَةُ عَلَى مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ، وَفِيهِ دَلِيلٌ عَلَى أَنَّ مَنْ عَجَزَ عَنِ إِرَازَةِ الْمُنْكَرِ، لَا يَأْتِمُ بِمُحَرَّدِ السُّكُوتِ، بَلْ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِمُ بِالرَّضَى بِهِ، أَوْ بِأَنْ لَا يَكْرَهَهُ بِقُلْبِهِ، أَوْ بِالْمُتَابَعَةِ عَلَيْهِ. وَأَمَّا قَوْلُهُ: أَفَلَا نَقْاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا مَا صَلُوْا فِيهِ مَعْنَى مَا سَقَ، أَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ الْحُرُوجُ عَلَى الْخُلَفَاءِ بِمُحَرَّدِ الظُّلْمِ أَوِ الْفِسْقِ مَا لَمْ يُعَيِّرُوا شَيْئًا مِنْ قَوَاعِدِ الْإِسْلَامِ.

His statement ﷺ, ‘but whoever is pleased with their bad deeds and follows them’, means rather sin and punishment will be earned by the one who is pleased and goes along [with them]. This contains a proof that the one who is incapable of removing an evil is not considered sinful by his mere silence; rather, he will only earn sin by being pleased with him [an unjust ruler] or not hating him in his heart, or by following him. As for the part, ‘Should we not fight them?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer’. This contains the same meaning as what preceded, that it is prohibited to rebel against the rulers merely on account of oppression or corruption, so long as they do not alter anything from the principles of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

‘Awf b. Mālik ﷺ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

خِيَارُ أَئِمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَكُمْ، وَيُصْلُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَتُصْلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَشَرَّ أَئِمَّتِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تُبْغِضُونَهُمْ وَيُبْغِضُونَكُمْ، وَتُلْعَنُونَهُمْ وَيُلْعَنُونَكُمْ. قَيْلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَلَا نُنَابِدُهُمْ بِالسَّيِّفِ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا مَا أَقَامُوا فِيهِمُ الصَّلَاةَ، وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مِنْ وُلَّاتِكُمْ

<sup>1</sup> Qādī Iyād, *Ikmāl al-mu‘līm bi fawā’id Muslim*, 6:264–265.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 6:264.

شَيْئاً تَكْرِهُونَهُ فَأَكْرَهُوْهُ عَمَلَهُ، وَلَا تَنْزِعُوهُ يَدًا مِنْ طَاعَةٍ.

‘The best of your rulers are those whom you love and who love you, who invoke God’s blessings upon you and upon whom you invoke His blessings. And the worst of your rulers are those whom you hate and who hate you, and whom you curse and who curse you’. It was asked, ‘O Messenger of God! Should we not overthrow them with the help of the sword [i.e., arms]?’ He said, ‘No, as long as they establish prayer amongst you. If you then find anything detestable in a ruler, you should hate his action, but do not withdraw from his writ and authority’.<sup>1</sup>

The scholars of hadith have interpreted this hadith and said that the phrase, ‘but do not withdraw from his writ and authority’, means that unless the rulers order you to disbelieve, it is strictly forbidden to rebel against them. The Prophet’s saying ‘as long as they establish prayer amongst you’ describes them as Muslims metaphorically, so the implicit meaning is, ‘as long as they are Muslims’. It does not necessarily mean that they offer prayers regularly five times a day and are pious and God-fearing. The reason why it does not mean that they literally establish the five daily prayers is because the same hadith has already declared them the worst of the rulers. It is apparent that since the Muslims would hate them, they would dislike the Muslims and would be called the worst rulers due to their oppression, evil deeds and injustice. We cannot expect them to be staunch Muslims who regularly offer prayers and fast. Had that been so, they would not have been given the pejorative ‘the worst of rulers’. In spite of this, the Prophet ﷺ said that as long as they continue to offer prayers amongst you—implying that they are called Muslims, even if in word and not in deed—armed rebellion should not be undertaken against them.

Imam al-Qurṭubī has explained these words in *al-Mufhim li ma ushkila min talkhīṣ kitāb Muslim*, a commentary on Muslim’s

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ: Kitāb al-imāra* [The Book of Leadership], chapter: ‘The Best and the Worst of the Leaders’, 3:1481 §1855; and Ibn Ḥibbān in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 10:449 §4589.

*Sahīh*. He said, ‘Just as he described those who pray as Muslims, as he ﷺ said, “I have been forbidden from killing those who pray”, meaning the Muslims’.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this legal meaning would also apply here as well.

Imam al-Tirmidhī narrated this hadith from Umm Salama ﷺ on his own authority:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: إِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَئِمَّةٌ تَعْرِفُونَ وَتُنْكِرُونَ، فَمَنْ أَنْكَرَ فَقَدْ بَرِيءَ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ، وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ. فَقَيْلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا مَا صَلُوَا.

‘The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Indeed, rulers will be appointed over you, and you find some things with them agreeable and other things disagreeable. So, whoever detests their bad deeds will be absolved of blame and whoever censures their bad deeds will find safety; but whoever is pleased with their bad deeds and follows them [will not find safety or be absolved of blame]’. It was said, ‘O Messenger of God! Should we not fight them?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer [i.e., are Muslims]’.<sup>2</sup>

‘Abd al-Rahmān Mubārakpūrī wrote regarding this hadith,

أَفَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا أَيْ: لَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ مَا ذَلَّوْا. إِنَّمَا مَنَعَ عَنِ مُقَاتَلَتِهِمْ مَا ذَلَّوْا يُقْبِلُونَ الصَّلَاةَ، الَّتِي هِيَ عُنْوَانُ الْإِسْلَامِ حَذِيرًا مِنْ هَيْبَةِ الْفِتْنَ وَاحْتِلَافِ الْكَلِمَةِ.

‘The question “Should we not fight them?” and the Prophet’s reply, “Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer” mean that they were forbidden from fighting them as long as they establish the prayer—the distinguishing mark of Islam—for fear of discord and disunity’.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Mufhīm li ma ushkila min talkhīṣ Kitāb Muslim*, 4:66.

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-fitān* [The Book of Tribulation], chapter:78, 4:529 §2265.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahmān Mubārakpūrī, *Tuhfat al-alhwadhbī*, 6:138.

This means that permission has been granted to the Muslims to carry out their democratic and constitutional struggle through peaceful means by demonstrating patience over the injustice of the rulers, so as to avoid mischief, bloodshed and massacre amongst the Muslim *Umma*. Armed rebellion and war were ruled out.

In the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd there is a narration in which Ḥabib b. Mihṣan through Umm Salama, the Mother of the Believers ﷺ, reported:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: سَتَكُونُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَئِمَّةٌ تَعْرِفُونَ مِنْهُمْ وَنَكِرُونَ، فَمَنْ أَنْكَرَ قَالَ أَبُو دَاؤُدْ: قَالَ هِشَامٌ: بِلِسَانِهِ فَقَدْ بَرِئَ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ بِقَلْبِهِ فَقَدْ سَلِمَ، وَلَكِنْ مَنْ رَضِيَ وَتَابَعَ فَقَيْلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَلَا نَفْتَلِهُمْ؟ قَالَ أَبُو دَاؤُدْ: أَفَلَا نُقَاتِلُهُمْ؟ قَالَ: لَا، مَا صَلَّوْا.

‘The Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed, rulers will be appointed over you, and you find some things with them agreeable and other things disagreeable. So, whoever detests their bad deeds [Abū Dāwūd said, ‘Hishām said, “With his tongue”] will be absolved of blame, and whoever detests their bad deeds with his heart will find safety; but whoever is pleased with their bad deeds and follows them [will not find safety or be absolved of blame]”. It was said, “O Messenger of God! Should we not fight them?” He ﷺ replied, “Do not fight them as long as they observe the prayer [i.e., are Muslims]”.<sup>1</sup>

These hadith reports and their commentaries illustrate two points in particular: firstly, armed revolt is prohibited against the Muslim rulers despite their corruption, deviation, oppression and injustice, and that is because of the fear of disruption, mass killing and bloodshed. There are several peaceful ways to bring these erring governments back to the right path. Secondly, it is impermissible to engage in armed revolt against the rulers unless they commit and demonstrate manifest disbelief. If a group

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan: Kitāb al-Sunna* [The Book of the Sunna], chapter: ‘On Fighting the Kharijites’, 4:242 §4760.

launches an armed struggle in the name of enforcing the Shariah, it becomes necessary, nay mandatory, for the state to crush it with all its might.